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iPharro Peddles Video Fingerprinting

Image fingerprinting for user-generated content is in hot demand right now, as video-sharing sites rush to be on the good side of powerful content owners. Audible Magic has emerged as the leading contender, with a rumored deal with YouTube, but it faces competition from the likes of Gracenote. German startup iPharro is just now trying a name for itself in the field, commercializing five years of academic research on video recognition.

iPharro, a spinoff of the Fraunhofer Institute for Computer Graphics, recently received €4 million in funding from Triangle Ventures. Previously, the company's video detection technology, which is based on isolating similar objects and colors to mimic human seeing, was put to use in medical imagery.

In a recent interview, iPharro CEO David Fisher bragged that when iPharro went head to head with multiple competitors for a deal with Nielsen Media Research, tracking every broadcast of a commercial advertisement in Germany for three months, it had a 100 percent success rate and won Nielsen's business.

Other iPharro customers include the government of Singapore's content rating division, as well as TV stations in Cyprus. iPharro is also, of course, looking past television and movies to online video, and has met with sites such as Break.com.

Isn't it a little late to start making a name for yourself in online video filtering, what with companies like Bolt already selling themselves to escape copyright infringement lawsuits?

"We all wish we had started three years earlier, but three years ago people weren't as sensitized to this as they are now," is Fisher's reply.

Fisher, whose background is in TV industry rights management, said "Google and them will realize just catching the video is the first step; OK now what, who owns the rights?" He contended iPharro has a more comprehensive solution, with established systems for dealing with the nuances of what payments should be distributed to whom.

iPharro, which was formerly known as Semiotix, has 10 employees and is hiring.